

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 ACDA-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /092 W
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R 221705Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3751
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO
USDOCOSOUTH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ROME 11641

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJECT: VIEWS OF PCI OFFICIAL

SUMMARY. ACCORDING TO A SENIOR ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCI) OFFICIAL, HIS PARTY HOPES THAT AN EARLY AGREEMENT CAN BE REACHED AMONG THE POLITICAL FORCES IN THE SEARCH FOR A SUCCESSOR TO PRESIDENT LEONE, AND HE INDICATED THAT THE PCI WOULD SEEK TO OBTAIN CERTAIN POLITICAL COMMITMENTS FROM THE CANDIDATE IT EVENTUALLY SUPPORTS. THE PCI HAS NOT YET DECIDED ON THE COURSE IT WILL FOLLOW, ALTHOUGH DIRECTORATE MEMBER GIORGIO AMENDOLA IS LIKELY TO BE THE PARTY'S FIRST BALLOT, FAVORITE-SON CANDIDATE. THE COMMUNIST OFFICIAL DESCRIBED RELATIONS BETWEEN THE COMMUNIST AND THE SOCIALIST PARTIES AS BEING AT THEIR LOWEST LEVEL SINCE 1945. HE ATTRIBUTED THE RECENT PCI ELECTORAL REVERSES TO A VARIETY OF CAUSES, ALTHOUGH HE FELT THAT SHORTCOMINGS IN THE PARTY'S ECONOMIC PROGRAM PLAYED PERHAPS THE MAJOR ROLE. THE PCI OFFICIAL NOTED THAT AN EXCEEDINGLY IMPORTANT CENTRAL
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COMMITTEE SESSION WOULD BE HELD IN JULY IN WHICH SOME PERSONNEL CHANGES WOULD BE DECIDED. HE PREDICTED THAT ADDITIONAL CHANGES WOULD BE CARRIED OUT AT A CRUCIAL PARTY CONGRESS SCHEDULED FOR EARLY 1979. END SUMMARY.

1. IN A JUNE 19 CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, PCI DIRECTORATE MEMBER (AND ECONOMICS EXPERT) LUCIANO BARCA COMMENTED

EXPANSIVELY ON CURRENT ITALIAN DEVELOPMENTS. HIGHLIGHTS OF HIS REMARKS FOLLOW.

2. LEONE'S RESIGNATION. ACCORDING TO BARCA, THE POSSIBILITY OF PRESIDENT LEONE RESIGNING HAD ALREADY BEEN IN THE AIR PRIOR TO THE PRECIPITOUS EVENTS OF JUNE 15. HE SUGGESTED THAT SOME CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC (DC) ELEMENTS HAD BEEN POINTING TO A RESIGNATION ON JUNE 29 (THE BEGINNING OF WHAT WOULD HAVE BEEN THE SO-CALLED WHITE SEMESTER), AND HE EXPRESSED HIS BELIEF THAT NEWS LEAKS SUGGESTING LEONE'S INVOLVEMENT IN ILLEGAL FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES HAD BEEN STIMULATED BY ELEMENTS IN THE DC USING INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY (AND AVAILABLE TO) EITHER ONE OF THE INTELLIGENCE SERVICES OR THE GUARDIA DI FINANZA. ONCE IT BECAME CLEAR ON JUNE 15 THAT THE PCI HAD TO MOVE TO CALL FOR THE RESIGNATION, OR RISK BEING OUTFLANKED BY ANOTHER POLITICAL PARTY, BARCA SAID THAT SECRETARIAT MEMBER PAOLO BUFALINI WAS SENT TO THE QUIRINALE ATO ALERT LEONE OF THE DECISION THE PCI WOULD BE TAKING; HOWEVER, LEONE DECLINED TO RECEIVE BUFALINI.

3. ELECTION OF A NEW PRESIDENT. BARCA EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT AN AGREEMENT CAN BE REACHED AMONG THE POLITICAL PARTIES WHICH WOULD LEAD TO THE ELECTION OF A NEW PRESIDENT AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE. HE DECLINED TO SPECULATE ON LIKELY SERIOUS CANDIDATES POINTING OUT THAT WITH PARTY SECRETARY BERLINGUER OUT OF ROME UNTIL JUNE 21, THE PCI

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LEADERSHIP HAD NOT YET BEGUN TO DISCUSS THE STRATEGY IT WOULD FOLLOW TO ASSURE THAT ITS INTERESTS ARE BEST SERVED. (BARCA INDICATED THAT THE PCI'S LIKELY FAVORITE-SON CANDIDATE ON THE FIRST BALLOT WILL BE VETERAN PARTY LEADER GIORGIO AMENDOLA INSTEAD OF SENATOR UMBERTO TERRACINI WHO HAS BEEN THE PCI'S FIRST BALLOT CHOICE IN EVERY PREVIOUS PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.) BARCA DENIED RUMORS CIRCULATING THAT THERE HAS ALREADY BEEN A PCI-DC AGREEMENT ON A CANDIDATE FOR THE QUIRINALE. HE DID NOT RULE OUT EVENTUAL PCI SUPPORT FOR A DC CANDIDATE, BELITTLING SOCIALIST PARTY (PSI) SECRETARY CRAXI'S ARGUMENT THAT THE NEXT PRESIDENT SHOULD COME FROM THE RANKS OF THE LAY PARTIES. AT THE SAME TIME, HE HINTED THAT A SUCCESSFUL DC CANDIDATE WOULD HAVE TO COMMIT HIMSELF, PREFERABLY IN HIS SPEECH OF ACCEPTANCE, TO POLITICAL OBJECTIVES SOUGHT BY THE PCI. STRESSING THAT THE PARTY HAD NOT YET DECIDED UPON THE COURSE IT WOULD FOLLOW, BARCA STATED THAT HE COULD SEE THE PCI SEEKING A COMMITMENT FROM A CANDIDATE IT SUPPORTS TO DO EVERYTHING WITHIN HIS POWERS AS PRESIDENT TO PERMIT THE PRESENT PARLIAMENT TO RUN ITS FULL COURSE (UNTIL 1981). BARCA RECALLED THAT IN 1964, THE PCI HAD SOUGHT AND OBTAINED A COMMITMENT FROM SARAGAT IN RETURN FOR ITS VOTES WHICH FACILITATED HIS ELECTION.

NOT SURPRISINGLY, BARCA REFRAINED FROM EXTENSIVE SPECULATION ABOUT POSSIBLE INDIVIDUAL DC CANDIDATES; THE ONLY NAME HE MENTIONED WAS THAT OF SENATOR GUIDOGONELLA WHO, HE SAID, COULD POSSIBLY GAIN PCI SUPPORT SINCE, ALTHOUGH KNOWN AS AN ANTI-COMMUNIST, HE IS AN INDIVIDUAL OF NATIONAL PRESTIGE AND STRONG MORAL COURAGE.

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4. PCI-PSI RELATIONS. IN THE COMMUNIST LEADER'S OPINION, PCI-PSI RELATIONS ARE AT THEIR LOWEST POINT SINCE 1945. HE ATTRIBUTED THIS TO THE LACK OF ANY CONFIDENTIAL TIES BETWEEN PCI LEADERS AND THE NEW PSI LEADERSHIP. BARCA STATED THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES HAD DETE-RIORATED SHARPLY AFTER THE MAY 14-15 ELECTONS. HE SAW SOME SMALL SIGNS THAT THE SOCIALISS WERE RETHINKING THEIR APPARENTLY HOSTILE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PCI, ALTHOUGH IT CERTAINLY WAS TOO EARLY TO PREDICT IN WHAT DIRECTION RELATIONS WOULD EVENTUALLY GO.

5. MAY ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS. BARCA CONCEDED THAT THE PCI HAD TAKEN A DRUBBING IN THE RECENT ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS. ASIDE FROM THE MORO EPISODE WHICH HAD HAD ITS INFLUENCE, BARCA FELT THAT THE PCI SETBACKS WERE LARGELY RELATED TO THE PARTY'S FAILURE TO PRODUCE IN THE ECONOMIC AREA. ALTHOUGH THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, WITH PCI SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE, HAD MADE GREAT STRIDES IN THE ECONOMIC AREA,

IT HAD MADE LITTLE PROGRESS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT,
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IN DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOUTH, AND IN INCREASING YOUTH
EMPLOYMENT. AS A PART OF THE MAJORITY, THE PCI SIMPLY
COULD NOT AVOID INCURRING THE DISPLEASURE OF A PORTION OF
ITS ELECTORATE DISILLUSIONED BY UNFILLED PROMISES IN
THE ECONOMIC AREA. BARCA ALSO CHARACTERIZED THE PCI'S
POLICIES TOWARDS THE UNIONS AS BEING DEFICIENT AND THUS
LEADING TO ELECTORAL WEAKNESSES.

6. MORE AGGRESSIVE PCI. BARCA SAID THAT THE PCI MUST BE
MORE AGGRESSIVE ON BOTH THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS IF IT
IS TO SUCCEED IN REGAINING THE POLITICAL INITIATIVE. ALONG
THIS LINE, THE PARTY HAS DECIDED TO REDUCE ITS PRESENCE
IN PARLIAMENT SO THAT PCI VOTES WILL NO LONGER BE DETER-
MINING ON VARIOUS ISSUES AND SO THAT THE PCI WILL NOT BE
SUSCEPTIBLE TO PSI CHARGES OF TRYING TO HEGEMONIZE THE
PARLIAMENT. (BARCA LAMENTED THE VIRTUALLY NON-EXISTENT
PRESENCE OF THE PSI ON THE FLOORS OF THE TWO HOUSES OF
PARLIAMENT.) ON THE LOCAL LEVEL, BARCA STATED PCI PARTY
OFFICIALS ARE OFTEN TOO RETICENT TO PURSUE IDEAS NOT ALREADY
PUT INTO EFFECT ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL, AND THUS THEY ARE
PRONE TO COPY NATIONAL POLITICAL PATTERNS RATHER THAN ADAPT
THEIR POLICIES TO FIT LOCAL NEEDS. THIS HAS BEEN A SERIOUS
MISTAKE, AND THE LACK OF INITIATIVE AND TRONG PCI LEADERSHIP
ON THE LOCAL POLITICAL LEVEL HAVE BEEN FACTORS IN THE RECENT
POLITICAL SETBACKS.

7. PCI POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE,
BARCA SEES A CENTRAL COMMITTEE SESSION IN JULY AND A PARTY
CONGRESS EARLY NEXT YEAR AS IMPORTANT MILESTONES FOR THE
PARTY. HE STATED THAT A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF PERSONNEL
CHANGES, AIMED AT PARTY RENEWAL, OULD BE OCCURRING IN THE
ENSUING MONTHS, AND BARCA DID NOT EXCLUDE THAT EVEN HIS
POSITION COULD BE CALLED INTO QUESTION. ASKED ABOUT
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THE FUTURE OF BERLINGUER, BARCA REPLIED THAT QUOTE THE PARTY
NEEDS HIM END QUOTE.

8. PCI YOUTH ORGANIZATION (FGCI). BARCA DESCRIBED THE
FGCI AS AN ORGANIZATION HAVING A LEADERSHIP WHICH DOES NOT
CORRESPOND TO THE NEEDS AND THE NATURE OF THE MEMBERSHIP.
THE PCI HAD ATTEMPTED, THROUGH THE LAST FGCI CONGRESS, TO
BRING ABOUT A CHANGE IN THE ORGANIZATION. HOWEVER, THE

FACT THAT THE CONGRESS WAS HELD IN THE MIDST OF THE MORO
KIDNAPPING, PRECLUDED THE PCI FROM BRINGING TIS PLANS TO
FULL FRUTION.GARDNER

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